

REMARKS

All outstanding requirements will now be addressed in the order they appear in the Office Action mailed December 3, 2007.

Specification

2. The abstract of the disclosure stands objected to because of the phrase “this invention” which is presumably implied. The phrase has been removed to make the abstract more concise. Withdrawal of the abstract objection is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 112

3-4. Claims 11-28 stand rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, as being allegedly indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention.

Applicants are not certain to which claims this rejection applies. Specifically, the heading in item 4 of the Office Action indicates that claims 11-28 are rejected, yet in the body of the rejection the Examiner is referring to claims 11, 20, and 29. Because claim 29 does not recite a “multifunctional” lever, Applicants are treating this rejection as applicable to claims 11-28 only. Appropriate correction and/or clarification is requested.

As for claims 11 and 20, and claims dependent thereon, Applicants respectfully submit that the term “multifunctional” refers to multiple actuating functions of a lever comprising a basic lever and one or more lever element(s). This is to say that in certain embodiments, the basic lever (1) is designed to perform a first actuating function, the first lever element (2) is designed to perform a second actuating function, and the second lever element (3) is designed to perform a third actuating function; hence, the term “multifunctional.”

Applicants have amended claims 11 and 20 to require that at least one lever element is separate from the basic lever, rather than requiring that all lever elements are separate from the basic lever.

In light of Applicants' arguments and amendments withdrawal of the indefiniteness rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 103

5-6. Claims 11-36 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over US Pat No 6,641,184 to Erices et al ("Erices '184") in view of JP Pat No. 8218710 to Tatsuhiro et al ("Tatsuhiro").

Applicants respectfully disagree. First, the Examiner has rejected claims 11-36, which are entitled to a priority date of May 8, 2003 over a U.S. Patent which issued on Nov. 4, 2003, *i.e.*, after the priority date to which Applicants are entitled. Thus, the rejection over Erices '184 is improper under 35 USC § 103.

In addition, neither Erices '184 nor Tatsuhiro, alone or in combination, teach or recite a basic lever rigidly and inseparably connected to separate lever element(s). While Erices '184 fails to disclose that one of the lever elements is a separate member connected to the basic lever. (admitted by Examiner on p. 4, ll. 3-4, of the Office Action), in Tatsuhiro, the arm 51 is separably connected to the arm 51 via a quick disconnect member 6 attached to wire 7 and is also non-rigidly (rotatably) connected to a driven gear 93 via core projection 94.

In light of Applicants' arguments and amendments withdrawal of the prior art rejection is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants submit that the pending claims are in condition for allowance. Early and favorable reconsideration is respectfully solicited. Should an extension of time be required, Applicants hereby petition for same and request that the extension fee and any other fee required for timely consideration of this submission and of the Information Disclosure Statement submitted concurrently herewith be charged to **Deposit Account No. 503182**.

Customer Number: **33,794**

Respectfully Submitted,

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